

A PREACHER'S SON COMES TO CHRIST

January 29, 2008 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article)

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I highly recommend *Training Your Children to Turn out Right* by David Sorenson. This powerful and important book can be ordered from Northstar Ministries, 1820 W. Morgan St., Duluth, MN 55811, 218-726-0209, www.northstarministries.com, dhs.northstar@charter.net.

Following is the section of the book that gives Pastor Sorenson's own testimony of salvation.

I believe one problem in many Christian homes is that the children have made professions of faith, but have never actually been born again. ... A child who has a divinely created new nature within his or her heart will be spiritually sympathetic to being trained in righteousness. ... Therefore, it is of utmost importance that we carefully instruct and coach our children about salvation. ...

I have known of many young people who] professed to be saved in their childhood; but in reality, they were never born again. They went through the motions and walked an aisle. They learned the language, but they were never regenerated. ...

As a boy of five, I had gone (or been taken) forward in an evangelistic meeting. I do not know who the preacher was. I do not remember what the sermon was about. In fact, as I recall, I slept through much of the service. I have absolutely no recollection of who prayed with me or how I was dealt with in the prayer room. ... After that meeting, I was coached to tell others that I had gotten saved. Therefore, over the next fifteen years, if someone asked me if I was saved, I would reply, 'Oh yes. I was saved when I was five years old.' Now, I believe that five-year-old children can be saved, but I do not believe that I was saved then. If it had not been for faithful parents who continued to pray for me over those years, I may not have been genuinely converted when I was in Bible college. I believe in my case and in many others, there was a lack of conviction about sin and its consequences in both heart and mind. It is a crucial prerequisite to the new birth. ...

In Bible college, I was searching spiritually. I went to a spiritual leader and told him of my heart's confusion. He dismissed my concern and told me I was just seeking assurance of my salvation. Well, as it turned out, what I really was seeking was salvation. ... If your children come to you and tell you they are not sure that they are saved, treat it as though they have never made any profession of faith. You do not know their hearts; only God does. Beware of saying, 'Oh, honey, you took care of that a long time ago. Don't you remember?' It may be that the Holy

Ghost is dealing in his heart. Do not assume that because he has gone through the motions that he is born again. ...

[Saving] faith includes repentance. Repentance is not doing anything. It is not a deed, act, work, or rite. Rather, it is a change of the direction of one's heart. It basically means an attitude of the heart in turning from sin and self and turning to God. That's what Paul was referring to in Acts 20:21 when he referred to 'repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' Saving faith is the human heart turning to God and then trusting in Jesus Christ. ... Even as there is the part of trusting Christ, there is also the part of turning to Him. That may seem inconsequential, but I believe that here is a spiritual reason they some go through the motions of believing in Christ but are not really born again. They seemingly want the fire escape but there is no interest in turning to God. There is no interest in repentance. They have the attitude, 'God, gimme salvation, but I'm gonna keep on doing my own thing.' ... However, if there is no real turning to God from the heart, they have missed the prerequisite for actually trusting Christ. ...

As a young man in my junior year at Pillsbury Baptist Bible College, God convicted me. I had never really been saved though I had been a professing Christian for the preceding 15 years. ... I began to think back over my life to that point. I knew that the Bible taught that 'if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature' (2 Corinthians 5:17). I knew that if a person was really saved, there would be an interest in the things of God. There would be some sort of internal aversion to sin. Anyone who knew me during my teenage years would have remembered me as a rebellious preacher's kid.

I had absolutely no interest in the things of God. I only went to church because my dad was the pastor, and I had to go. I could not have cared less about the Bible. Things like witnessing and having a testimony were about as alien to me as living in Afghanistan. I loved the things of the world. My mind and my vocabulary were as foul as any one else in the world. I thought like the world thought. I liked what the world did, and I wanted to do what the world did. Only the strictness of my upbringing and of the college I was attending prevented me from actually doing a significant amount of it.

I lay there on my bed that morning in November 1966. As I mulled all of this over in my mind, I knew that I had no recollection of conviction when I went forward as a boy. I reflected over the fact that there had never been any change in my life spiritually that I could remember. I knew the sinfulness of my heart as a 20-year-old college student, and I considered the lack of interest in the things of God in my life.

Slowly that November morning, the Holy Spirit convicted me of the fact that I had never really been saved. I had gone through the motions of it as a small boy and had professed salvation all those years. For the first time in my life it was dawning on me that I was not saved, and for someone who had assumed to be saved for the past 15 years, it came as quite some shock. ... As I thought about the situation, it suddenly dawned upon me, 'If I am not saved, then I am on my way to hell.' I had never in my entire life given any serious consideration to that fact. It kind of

shook me up. ... I realized that I was dealing with a serious matter. After wrestling spiritually with the conviction of the Holy Spirit for some time, I knew I had to settle the matter. I knelt beside my bed and prayed, 'Dear Lord, I know I am a sinner. I really don't know what happened when I was five years old. But I don't think I really was saved then. Oh Lord, please save me and cleanse me of my sins and give me eternal life.'

There were no bolts of lightning or thunder claps, but a peace swept across my soul. I knew I had settled the matter. There no longer was any doubt. I had trusted Christ and I knew it. I claimed Romans 10:13, 'For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.' This time there had been a clear understanding of my lost condition, and this time there was a deep willingness to turn to Christ and trust Him. Praise the Lord, He saved me.

Very soon thereafter, my life began to make some radical changes. Even as a student in a Christian college, my interest in serving the Lord had been somewhere between little and none. Witnessing and soul winning were alien to me. Not only did I not know how; I did not care.

Now I suddenly became burdened for the guy I worked with at a TV repair shop in town. Within six weeks of making peace with Jesus Christ, I had led him to Christ and attempted to win my other co-workers there. I began going to a reformatory to help conduct services and then on to the Minnesota State Penitentiary at Stillwater, Minnesota, for services. Before long I was preaching at the prison myself. Prior to my salvation experience, I honestly could not have cared less about such things.

Something had happened to me. I had been born again (*Training Your Children to Turn out Right*, 1995, pp 156-167).

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